

Monday, February 11, 2013

Meeting called to order

Opening Prayer
Roll Call

Tribal Leaders Round Table Discussion

Nominations were taken for the DOJ Representation for MAST

Jennifer McCloud from Sault Ste. Marie tribe

Melanie Benjamin from Mille Lacs

Vote was taken and Melanie won

Some of the issues that were brought up during the Tribal Leaders discussion were:

GLRI by Frank Ettawageshik

The need to give this issue some attention due to the 5 year deadline for reinstatement and to continue its funding.

Wolf Hunt Initiative by Aaron Payment

Prescription Drugs by Jay Emery from St. Croix

- How do we get issue to go the Federals (DOJ) because the Feds do not slap hands when it comes to this problem. He stated that the State Police will not address this issue on their Federal Trust (reservation) lands.

Mining issue by gentleman from Bad River

Also the protection of water rights.

Mining issues by Chairman Thayer from LCO

- The have created a commission in defense of the issues they are having with the mining issues and also commented on the prescription drug issue and stated that they have taken a strong stand on this and have even

removed their tribal doctor.

Native Dropout rate by Aaron Payment

- He discussed the issues facing Native youth and their drop-out rate. NCES was an organization/website that lays out statistics concerning Native American youth and the statistics they face.

Kevin Washburn, Assistance Secretary of BIA

brought with him, Larry Roberts, lawyer and Nedra Darling, assistant

They have a new nominee for Secretary of Interior last week, Sally Jewel. Many organizations have come out publicly with their support.

He again addressed the need for a Patchek Patch, a protection from a challenge to the trust process that can take place within the 6 year statute of limitations on any Federal action. Very rarely are these cases challenged, but there needs to be more protections. He stated that they have become more proactive in the defense for the protection of our trust lands. Cobell case was given \$1.9 Billion for the tribes involved.

Tom Brierton, Franklin Creek Consulting

He address the current need for attention to the Farm Bill: this bill is very important to every American, not only to those that have large fields. There is much concern for Tribes input on this bill and that the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee will be here later today to gather our thoughts and concerns. We need to change the program definitions when it comes to our Great Lakes and the tools used on and in them.

Dante Desiderio, NAFOA

Worked on getting the IRS to be a more open organization. They do need to consult with tribes and have drafted a policy in regards to that. They need to hear more directly from the tribes.

He wants a blanket exclusion for all general welfare that is offered through the Tribal Government.

Congressman Frank Lucas, OK 3rd District

Many of the tribes in OK reside in the 3rd district. He is working on the Farm Bill. He

commented on the huge turnover in congress over the last 10 years. All that experience is now gone and there are a lot of freshman, less than 20 years of experience. This makes crafting the farm bill a more challenging of a task and speaking from a Tribal perspective, we will need to educate them on our issues all over. They all mean well, but they just don't know. The education portion of lobbying is an integral part of this farm bill. The Agriculture Committee has 46 members, of which 23 were all new. As the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, he had to essentially start over in the education process. 80% of spending goes to Nutrition (WIC, School Lunches ECT)...other 20% corn/wheat programs. This leaves very little left over for conservation and regulation.

Al Franken, Honorable Senator Minnesota

He addressed many issues that affect Indian Country. When he was newly elected, he requested to be on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Health, Natural Resources, Education issues were some of his topics. He commented on the state of affairs that students face in Minnesota as well as the Asian Carp issue that continues to threaten the Great Lakes. He was very entertaining and I feel he is truly going to continue to fight for Indian issues at the Federal level.

Jack Thorpe, Executive Director for the Association on American Indian Affairs

He spoke on the need for a reform to the current Federal Recognition process. His quest is to raise funds throughout Indian Country in order to hire a team where this policy reform process would be someone's full time job. This person could actually get something accomplished over a two year life span. Each of the past 8 Secretaries of Interiors has stated that the process is not in the favor for either recognized or non-recognized Tribes. This needs attention. However, with their job duties, it is seldom ever addressed and reformed. Being able to raise funds and hire a staff would assist the department in establishing a policy that is conducive to all Tribes and would smooth out the process in obtaining Federal recognition. He outlined some of the reasons that all Tribes, dependent on their status, should be involved in the reform project.

Shoshana Beth Phillips, Executive Director for Heritage of Healing

Her daughter shared an idea she has been working on since she was the age of 5. Many programs for kids with cancer, but cancer can affect everyone in the family. This is how her idea started. She has a house in her area for those that are obtaining services at the U of M Hospital. She has created a place where kids and their families can take a break, they offer vacations and summer camps for those dealing with cancer. Shoshana also mentioned that they are trying to provide families with gift cards to purchase specific food that patience need while in treatment. She shared that she

was diagnosed 6 years ago with bone marrow cancer and that is why she says that they are able to offer these specialized programs with so much care. She wants people in Michigan/and other states to know that they are in the Ypsilanti area and can provide a place to stay during their treatments at area hospital. They are working on expanding their services as their current house is getting to be a little small.

I would like to know if she would be willing to release some data on and if they are providing services to LTBB families in any way in order to justify a donation of some sort to keep their efforts going. She did pass out some budget and contact information which I will pass onto Council. I also suggested to her that her and her daughter should write an article and submit to Tribal newspapers.

Tuesday Feb 12th, 2013

Tribal Leader Discussion

Much discussion was had on the prescription drug abuse and use in Indian Country. Where is it that MAST should be going in the direction in addressing this issue today on the Hill? Many comments were made concerning who in Tribal Government should be addressing this issue.

Mary Pavel, Staff Director of Senate Indian Affairs Committee

Today, is her 8th day at the job. She mentioned that she is going to need everyone's prayers for her in the future. She is calling for Michigan Tribes to be in the discussion concerning the Farm Reauthorization Bill, forest services and management. Cantwell is trying to partnership with all programs, departments, and committees in order to accomplish the ability to make substantial change legislatively to many of the issues in Indian Country. One of her goals is working and completing a fix to Carcieri.

Cathy Abramson, Chairperson National Indian Health Board

One year extension of the Special Diabetes Program passed by Obama, to be funded for another year during the recent budget troubles, is a wonderful thing. They continue to advocate for meaningful consultations between our health board and the policy makers and also to push for states to continue to work with the tribes. There is still a problem with the definition of Indian and it is amplified by the application process for the Affordable Care Act. They are working towards a better system in defining an Indian. She encouraged the use of their website to gain input from tribes, and stated that MAST will be creating a website as well for better communication in order to make

better decisions. She is willing to adjust the agenda at the August meeting to accommodate the discussion concerning prescription drug use and its problems. Today, she is asking for help on the hill from the leaders as we all make our visits. Stop sequestration cuts to IHS. She wants us to give this issue attention today when meeting with Senate and House Reps. We need to start lobbying for the exemption that Social Security, Medicare, Vets programs, and the Vet affairs are receiving from the Sequestrations Cuts. She also drew our attention to statistics concerning HIV/AIDs, we as Indian People contract it faster and die quicker from it than any other race in the world due to the lack of access to testing and the drugs used to fight the disease.

Chris Fluhr, Staff Director of House of Indian Affairs Subcommittee

He states that the Budget Sequestration will occur. They are in support of bi-partisan legislation when it comes to Indian Affairs. Chairman Young of the subcommittee is working with the Senate of Indian Affairs Committee for an energy leasing program for trust lands.

Frank Ettawageshik drew his attention to the funding issue with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and the fact that there is also going to be a reauthorization push due to the current 5 year deadline coming up.

Administrator Fugate National Tribal Affairs FEMA

NARF Request

House and Senate passed a bill for relief efforts for Hurricane Sandy. What was not talked about was the amendments to the Stafford Act...they were originally written to acknowledge Tribes as a sole governing being. But the act listed tribes as a political subdivisions and that FEMA would go to the Governors. But now the Stafford Act has been amended and moved Federally Recognized Tribes as a Government to Government relationship, where tribes can now request FEMA funding directly from the department and not have to go through the State to obtain relief. They are making it clear that States do NOT have a say in how we obtain funding, thereby Strengthening our self-determination. They realize that one size fits all does not work when it comes to working with Tribes, they are trying to achieve flexibility through their regulation process.

Chairman Terry Rambler ITC of Arizona

He discussed the update on the Baby Veronica case. How the media has reported false details on the case to turn the view of the American people. This case is now going to be heard in a known hostile Supreme Court, hostile to Tribal issues. The possibility of the outcome is that the Court could find the provisions within ICWA could be found unconstitutional. He is asking us to request from our leaders for group support for an

Amicus Brief in support of ICWA. Jack Trope is preparing an Amicus Brief now. Groups are now working on an argument as to why the ICWA is still a relevant and needed piece of legislation in Indian Country. 1/4 million dollars is being spent on support of this case where a majority is being spent on a media blitz of the true facts in this case. Sault Ste. Marie, Aaron Payment, made an announcement that his tribe will be donating \$25000 to the cause. We also declared that we will be donating money and also Stock Bridge Munsey.

Congress/Senate Visit Prep

We were able to have lunch with our Lobbyist, Lydia Hofman, who was able to share her feelings of each of the Representatives that we were all going to make a visit to and shared her last couple of reports with us. It was nice to finally meet and talk with her and see what she thought of several of the issues that were discussed during the Tribal Leader Roundtables and the issues that we were all taking to our Congressmen and Senators. She walked us to where we needed to be after lunch.

My group started with Lobbyist Tom Brierton and myself, at least for the first two. The last two I joined bigger groups.

1:30-Congresswoman Kristi Noem (R-SD), Renee Latterell (Staffer)

2:30-Congressman Sandy Levin (D-MI), Dan Jourdan (Staffer)

3:30-Congresswoman Betty McCullom, Rebecca Taylor (Staffer)

4:30-Congressman Frank Pallone (D-NJ) actually met with him

Items that were discussed with all of the above were:

- Support for nomination of Sally Jewell for the Secretary of the Interior
- Support for MAST Resolution Calling for a new Obama Native Nations Policy
 - Congressman Frank Pallone took special consideration for this particular point and directed his staffer to draft up a statute in support and to solidify the points outlined within the MAST Resolution
- Mining Issue
- Prescription Drug Abuse in Indian Country
- Sequestration cuts to Indian Health Services

Again, I would like to thank Tribal Council for allowing me to attend this important opportunity to meet with our Representatives at the National Level. It is very crucial for LTBB to stay on top and involved at the National level of administration and to preserve

our relationships with our elected officials and to keep them up to speed of the Tribal voice.